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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 001998

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TAGS: MARR PREL SR

SUBJECT: ACTION REQUEST: MASSAGING SERBIA?S PRESENTATION DOCUMENT

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR MICHAEL C. POLT, REASON 1.4 (B,D)

This is an action request; see para 5.

¶1. (sbu) Serbia has been working with NATO International Staff since March, 2006 on a Presentation Document in anticipation of an eventual invitation to join PfP. As a result, by the time of the Riga Summit, the Serbian MoD and MFA were already nearly finished with a fairly comprehensive, forward-leaning Presentation Document that, *inter alia*, espoused a desire for eventual full membership in the alliance and made positive reference to the Serbian Army's ongoing cooperative efforts with KFOR.

¶2. (c) What the PD draft notably does not include is language reiterating Serbia's publicly stated commitment to fully cooperate with the ICTY. In addition, there is no reference to Kosovo other than that noted above (as of the latest draft, which we obtained on 12/11 and forwarded to USNATO and the Department). The official statement of PM Kostunica and his government acknowledging the invitation referenced PfP simply as an indicator of the "failure of the policy of conditionality" and a further guarantee by the international community of Serbia's territorial integrity, including Kosovo.

¶3. (c) We believe a central benefit of the PfP invitation and its timing was to support President Boris Tadic in the run-up to parliamentary elections in Serbia January 21, 2007, and at the same time to provide Tadic with an opportunity to publicly embrace his reformist intentions and desire for closer relations with NATO and the EU. President Tadic's November 20 letter to the President, which we have publicly cited as a key to gaining Serbia its PfP invitation, made two specific and important pledges - first, that Serbia would continue to be a force for stability in the Balkans following a status decision on Kosovo, and second, that Serbia will continue to do everything in its power to locate, arrest, and extradite Ratko Mladic and other remaining Hague indictees to the ICTY. The PD offers an opportunity for us to hold Serbia to the commitments Tadic made to the President on the key issues of ICTY and Kosovo.

¶4. (c) This key language should be a part of Serbia's presentation document as a reinforcement of the commitments of Serbia's reformist democratic leaders. In cooperation with other allies, we are prepared to engage energetically with Serbia's leadership to encourage such language to be a central component of the presentation document.

¶5. (c) Action request: We recommend that the USG engage with Allies, either in Brussels or Belgrade, to ensure that the text of Serbia's presentation document reiterates

Tadic's commitments to the President.

POLT